

Lesson 30a – Is Sunday the Biblical Sabbath?

Throughout various times in church history, various groups have tried to claim that it is wrong to go to church on Sunday, because the Sabbath is really Saturday – the 7th day of the week. Some of the groups that make that claim today are the *Seventh Day Adventists*, the *Seventh Day Baptists* and the *Seventh Day Church of God*.

1. The Claims of the Sabbatarian churches:

- a. God instituted the Sabbath on Saturday – the 7th day of the week,
 - i. He instituted it at creation when He rested the 7th day – Gen. 2:2-3 (God really didn't need to rest. The idea of the word here is that He stopped creating, because He was finished).
 - ii. The Sabbath was observed from the beginning – starting with Adam and Eve.
- b. God's plan was for His people to keep the Saturday Sabbath forever.
- c. God's people were to keep the Sabbath by going to public worship.
- d. The Jews of Jesus' day were obeying the Sabbath command of God when they went to the synagogue to worship.
- e. Jesus observed the 7th day Sabbath by going to synagogue, thereby proving that Saturday is the day God chose for us to worship.
- f. The New Testament church observed the 7th day Sabbath by holding services on Saturday, and not on Sunday.
- g. The Catholic Church changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday.
- h. Those of us who go to church on Sunday are wrong and unscriptural. Ellen G. White, one of the founders of the Seventh Day Adventists even called Sunday worship "the Mark of the Beast."

2. Checking out the Sabbath with the Scriptures – Isa. 8:20

- a. The meaning of *Sabbath*.
 - i. The Hebrew word means to cease, to stop, to rest. It does not mean to worship or to meet publicly.
 - ii. The purpose of the Sabbath, therefore, was to provide a weekly day of rest for God's people.
- b. The Sabbath was always the 7th day of the week – Saturday, and not Sunday. On this point we do not disagree with the Sabbatarians.
- c. The Sabbath was a special sign between God and the nation Israel. It was never given as a sign between God and the church. – Ex. 31:13
- d. How God commanded the Sabbath to be observed:
 - i. Do not do any work – Ex. 20:10
 - ii. Do not cause other people to have to work. – Ex. 20:10 (Modern day Sabbatarians think they are faithful in keeping the Sabbath, but they really do not follow the Biblical commands for the Sabbath. They changed the rules for the Sabbath).
 1. If you use the phone on the Sabbath you are causing people at the phone company to have to work.
 2. If you use electricity on the Sabbath, you are causing people at the electric company to have to work.
 3. If you drive to church on the Sabbath, you are causing the police to have to work.
 - iii. Do not allow your animals to work – Ex. 20:10

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- iv. Stay home (If you go to public worship on the Sabbath, you are actually breaking the Sabbath by not staying home). – Ex. 16:29
 - v. Do not light a fire (or cook) – Ex. 35:3
 - vi. Enforce Sabbath-keeping with the death penalty
 - 1. The command given – Ex. 31:14-15
 - 2. The command in practice – Num. 15:32-36
 - vii. There is not a single verse in Scripture that commands people to leave their houses and to go another place for public worship on the Sabbath, except for the times that the men are in Jerusalem for one of the public feasts.
 - e. The Commandments in the New Testament
 - i. Each of the Ten Commandments is reiterated in the New Testament except the 4th Commandment – the command to keep the Sabbath.
 - ii. There is no teaching of any kind in the New Testament about the responsibility of Christians to keep the Sabbath.
 - f. The synagogues in the time of Jesus
 - i. God never commanded synagogue worship on the Sabbath.
 - ii. Synagogues and Sabbath worship were never instituted by God. That's why you don't see them in the Old Testament. They were invented by the Jews around the 4th Century B.C.
 - iii. Going to synagogue on the Sabbath would be a violation of the Sabbath command to stay home – Ex. 16:29
 - g. Why did Jesus and His family go to the synagogue?
 - i. By that time, the purpose of the Sabbath had been obscured in Israel.
 - ii. Sincere Jews went to synagogue in the time of Jesus, because that's what they were being taught to do by the religious leaders.
 - iii. Jesus was not bound by the Sabbath Law, because He is the Lord of the Sabbath – Matt. 12:8
 - h. Did Christians in the New Testament worship on the Sabbath or on Sunday?
 - i. They met together as a church on the 1st Day of the Week – Sunday
 - 1. They met on the first day of the week – Acts 20:7
 - 2. They brought their tithes to church on the first day of the week – 1 Cor. 16:2
 - ii. There is no hint in Scripture that the New Testament Christians also set aside the Sabbath as a day for meeting and worship.
 - iii. Paul went to synagogue on the Sabbath to evangelize the Jews – Acts 18:4
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- a. Where does the Bible say that the Sabbath was observed from the time of Adam?
 - b. If the Sabbath was observed from the time of Adam, why did Moses have to explain what it was in Exodus 16 when he first gave instructions about it?
 - c. Why do you insist the Sabbath is a day of public worship when God said the way to observe it was to stay home and rest?
 - d. Do you cook on the Sabbath?
 - e. Do you cause other people to work on the Sabbath by driving or using public utilities?
 - f. Where does the Old Testament teach that Jews are supposed to go to synagogue on the Sabbath?
 - g. Where does the New Testament teach that Christians are supposed to go to church on the Sabbath?
 - h. Where does the New Testament show that God changed the purpose of the Sabbath to be used for public worship?